

Message Text

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SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SEYCHELLES INTEREST IN HELICOPTERS

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B) VICTORIA 307

1. NAIROBI-BASED HELICOPTER REPS KENNETH JOY (UNITED TECHNOLOGIES-SIKORSKY), FRED WICOX (BELL) AND MICHAEL BARRACLOUGH (HUGHES) MET JOINTLY WITH SEYCHELLES' PRIME MINISTER FRANCE ALBERT RENE DECEMBER 6 TO EXPLORE FURTHER POSSIBLE SEYCHELLES INTEREST IN HELICOPTERS FOR INTER-ISLAND TOURIST TRANSPORTATION. HOUR-LONG MEETING ALSO ATTENDED BY MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO ROBERT DELORIE WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF GOS PLANNING BOARD.

2. RENE AND DELORIE EXPLAINED GOS VIEW THAT HELICOPTERS ARE ONLY MEANS BY WHICH GOVERNMENT CAN ACHIEVE HIGH-PRIORITY GOALS OF GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUTER ISLANDS (SOME HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM PRINCIPAL ISLAND OF MAHE) AND INCREASE IN CAPACITY OF INNER ISLANDS TO ABSORB LARGER SHARE OF PROJECTED FOUR-FOLD INCREASE IN TOURIST POPULATION. REPRESENTATIVES EACH PRESENTED SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF HELICOPTERS WHICH MIGHT SUIT GOS REQUIREMENTS WITH JOY AND WILCOX CONCENTRATING ON NEW 12-14 PASSENGER TWIN ENGINE MODELS WHICH WILL BE AVAILABLE IN 18-24 MONTHS. (HUGHES AIRCRAFT

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PRODUCES ONLY SINGLE ENGINE HELICOPTERS WHICH ARE UNACCEPTABLE

UNDER PRESENT CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY REGULATIONS REQUIRING AIR-CARFT FLYING OVER WATER TO HAVE TWO ENGINES)

3. JOY AND WILCOX OFFERED TO SEND HELICOPTER EXPERTS TO SEYCHELLES ON GRATIS BASIS TO WORK WITH GOS PLANNING OFFICIALS IN DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON VIABILITY OF HELICOPTERS. RENE READILY ACCEPTED OFFER AND SUGGESTED EARLY 1977 AS BEST TIME FOR EXPERTS TO ARRIVE. ACTUAL DATE TO BE WORKED OUT LATER. WILCOX SAID, IN MEANTIME, HE WOULD PROVIDE GOS WITH INTERIM STUDY ON FEASIBILITY OF TOURIST-ORIENTED HELICOPTER SERVICE BETWEEN MAHE AND FIVE INNER ISLANDS.

4. IN ADDITION TO APPLICATION OF HELICOPTERS IN TOURIST PROMOTIONS PLANS, RENE AND DELORIE ALSO MENTIONED OTHER POSSIBLE USES FOR HELICOPTERS IN SEYCHELLES, INCLUDING PROVIDING GOVERNMENT SERVICE TO INHABITANTS OF OUTER ISLANDS AND AIR/SEA RESCUE.

5. COMMENT: HELICOPTER REPS WERE ENCOURAGED BY MEETING AND SAID THEY SAW REAL SALES POSSIBILITY. THEY ECHOED DELORIE'S CLOSING REMARK THAT MEETING HAD CLEARLY SHOWN HELICOPTERS HAVE FUTURE IN SEYCHELLES AND WERE PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN FIRST BUSINESSMEN TO DISCUSS SUBJECT FORMALLY WITH GOS. ALTHOUGH REPS EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE FOREIGN COMPETITORS (ESPECIALLY FRANCE) THEY FELT FREE STUDY AND QUALITY OF PRODUCT WOULD GIVE THEM INSIDE TRACK.

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